

Creating Your Palace in Time

An Intro to Shabbat at Home

Erev Shabbat Happens Every Friday Night

Begin with what is comfortable for you and build your Shabbat practice. It happens each week, so there is a lot of opportunity to learn and explore. The Jewish tradition has 6 basic touchstones to welcoming Shabbat, like the Jewish star which is an ancient mystical symbol of the union of the upper and lower worlds. This symbol is also found in Tibetan traditions and certainly predates any use by modern nation-states.



Six Basic Touchstones of Shabbat

1. Light your path to Shabbat, literally
2. Express gratitude for getting here, for each other
3. Sanctify the moment with blessing
4. Cleanse away the schmutz/dros/meh of the Week
5. Nourish body and spirit
6. Appreciate the gift of feeling full

Light your path to Shabbat

In Jewish practice, all holidays begin at sundown, so it makes sense to light candles. Our Sages linked the candle lighting with the commandment to keep and remember the Shabbat, so traditionally we light 2 candles, but there is no limit to the amount of light you wish to bring in on Shabbat.

Begin here and explore the difference in the concepts of “keeping” and “remembering,” or simply let the light into your soul. Then, before lighting the candle(s), you can offer this traditional blessing:

Blessing over the Candles

*Baruch atah Adonai,
Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

ברוך אתה יי
עלוהינו מלך העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו
וצונו להדליק נר של שבת

Blessed are You, Divine One, Ruler of the universe, who makes us holy through your commandments and instructed us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

Between lighting the candles and saying the blessing, some people symbolically draw in the light from the candles with gentle circular hand motions over the flame. It is traditional to cover or close our eyes while reciting this blessing. The reason for covering the eyes is that the usual order is to say the blessing before doing the action, but in this case, if we said the blessing first, thereby beginning Shabbat, we technically could not light a fire!



Expressing gratitude for getting here, for each other

Expressing gratitude keeps us centered in the present. It is a perfect way to enter our “Palace in Time.” Blessings function as expressions of gratitude and blessing the members of our household or other dear ones with whom we gather on Shabbat acknowledges how much we receive from them.

It is customary for parents to bless their children and each other, concluding with the priestly blessing. The sources of the tradition for blessing children are biblical Jacob blessed his grandsons Ephraim and Menasseh. The blessing for girls recalls the matriarchs of our people. The priestly blessing is taken from the biblical book of Numbers (6:24-26.) As the parents say the blessing, they place their hands on the children’s heads. There are also traditional blessings for “husbands “and “wives.”

Our “families” and ourselves are much different from those described in biblical times. We want to include everyone in our blessing ritual, so that may mean a departure from or re-inventing of the tradition. Feel free to pick and choose from the core of our tradition or create blessings of your own that express your gratitude for the people in your life.

Hebrew is a gendered language which challenges us to find new expressions that are inclusive for all. The blessings that follow have been transformed so that they are gender-neutral with modifications to the Hebrew pioneered at Camp Habonim Dror. Plural words are modified by combining the masculine and plural endings, im and ot, to become “imot,” and by using “ol” endings for singular gendered words, taken from “kol”- a word meaning “all.” For example, “you,” traditionally translated as the masculine “atah” or feminine “at,” becomes “atol”. Just note, this is a rendering of the Hebrew that has not yet found its way into the mainstream.

The traditional gendered blessings are easily found online. This is a gender-neutral version of the Blessing for the Children, using both the male and female ancestors, and the Priestly blessing for all, You are supported to say any and all of these blessings that resonate with you and those you wish to bless.

Blessing for the Children

*Y’simkhol Elohim k’sarah, rivka, rakhel, Leah, ephraim
u’menashe.*

Yivarekhekhon Adonay v’yishmarekhon.

Ya’er Adonay panav elekhon v’yihunekhon

Yisa Adonay panav elekhon vayasem lekholon shalom

יְשִׁימְכֹל יי' כְּשָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רַחֵל, לֵאָה, אֶפְרַיִם
וּמְנַשֶּׁה

יְבָרְכֵךְ יי' וְיִשְׁמְרֵךְ

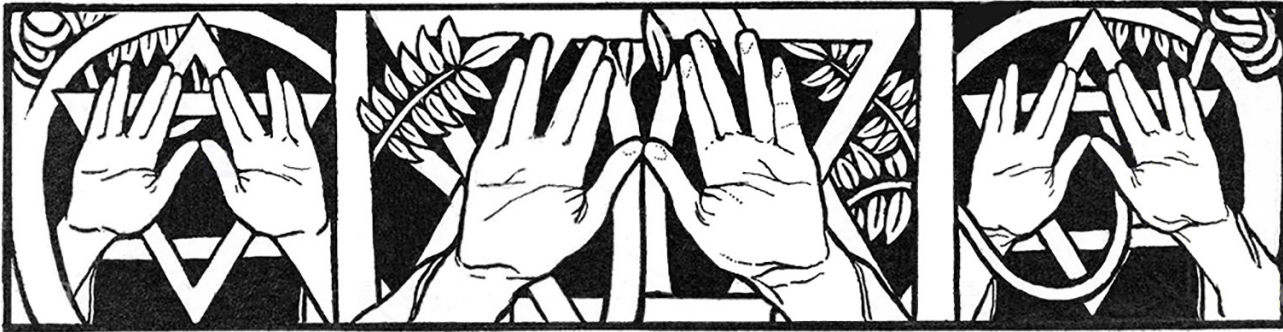
יָאֵר יי' פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִחַנְכֵךְ

יִשָּׂא יי' פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֵּׁם לְכֹל שְׁלוֹם

May the Divine One make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Ephraim and Menashe. May the Divine One bless you and keep you. May the Divine One be gracious to you. May the Divine One turn Their face to you and grant you peace.



Sanctify the moment with a blessing



Blessing can also be a way of setting something apart as special, seeing it through the lens of tradition and symbolic meaning.

Reciting the Kiddush, traditionally with wine or grape juice, asks us to focus on the holiness of the day. In Torah, The Divine One not only blessed the 7th day of creation but declared it holy. When we enter into Shabbat, we touch that holiness, drinking it in, experiencing it as a unique gift in our

lives, then, now, and always. On Friday night the Kiddush has four parts. The first part recalls the biblical account of the creation of Shabbat. The second part is the blessing over wine. The third describes the gift of Shabbat, its meanings and symbolism. And the fourth describes Shabbat as a sign of covenant between God and Israel.

Kiddush - part 1

*Va-yi-hi erev va -yi-hi voker, yom ha-shi-shi
Va-yi- chu-lu ha-shamayim v'ha-aretz v'chol tzi-va-am.
Va'yi-chal Elohim, ba-yom ha-sh-vi-i m'lachto asher asah
Vayish-boat, ba-yom hash-vi-i mikol mi-lach-to asher asa
Va-yi-va-rech Elohim et yom ha - sh'vi-i va-yikadesh oto.
Ki vo Shabbat mi-kol mi- lach-to asher barah
Elohim la-a-sot*

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי
וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם
וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ
כִּי בּו שַׁבַּת מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא
אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת



There was evening and there was morning. On the sixth day, the heavens and the earth and all their hosts were completed. And the Divine One completed, on the seventh day, all the work of the Divine One's making, and the Divine One ceased on the seventh day, all the work with which the Divine One had been engaged. And the Divine One blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because on it the Divine One God ceased all work of this creating. [Genesis 1:31, 2:1-3]

Kiddush - Part 2

*Baruch Atah Adonai,
Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam,
borei p'ri ha gafen*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Divine One, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Kiddush - Part 3

*Baruch a-ta Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam
asher ki-de-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav ve-ratsa vanu
v'shabbat kod-sho b'a-ha-va u've-ratson hin-chi lanu
zi-karon le-ma-ah-sei v'rei-shit.
Ki hu yom t'chi-la, le-mikra-ei ko-desh
ze-cher l'tsi- at Mitz-ra-yim.*

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו ורצה בנו
ושבת קדשו באהבה וברצון הנחילנו
זכרון למעשה בראשית
כי הוא יום תחילה למקרהאי קדש
זכר ליציאת מצרים

Blessed are You, Adonai our Divine One, Ruler of the Universe, who makes us holy through your commandments and favors us with the holy Shabbat, lovingly and graciously bestowed upon us, a memorial of the act of creation, first of the holy assemblies, a remembrance of the going forth from Egypt.

Kiddush - Part 4

*Ki va-nu va-char-ta v'o-ta-nu ki-dash-ta
mi-kol ha-a-mim. V'shab-bat kod-she-cha
be-a-hava u've-ra-tson hin-cha-lanu.
Baruch atah Adonai, m'kadaysh Ha Shabbat.*

כי בָּנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְשָׁתָּ
מִכָּל הָעַמִּים. וְשַׁבַּת קִדְשְׁךָ
בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת

You have reached out to us and showed us a path of holiness that was different from other peoples by lovingly and graciously bestowing upon us Your holy Shabbat. We praise You, O Divine One, who sanctifies Shabbat.



Cleanse away the schmutz/dros/meh of the week

Creating a Palace in Time not only requires getting into the right “head space.” Our tradition asks us to consider making a distinction in our physical reality as well. Of course, lighting candles begins this process, but we can take it a little deeper when we commit to washing out hands before we nourish our bodies. In that way, we enter our Palace in Time, without bringing in any lingering negativity from the week.

Prayer for Washing Our Hands

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

Blessed are You, Divine One, Ruler of the universe, who makes us holy through your commandments and instructed us on washing hands.

Nourish body and spirit

Now we are ready to take Shabbat nourishment. Challah looks and tastes different than other breads. Shabbat challah is linked to Torah in two ways: challah is the name of the portion of dough the Israelites were commanded to set aside as an offering each week and there are traditionally 2 challot on a Shabbat table to symbolize the double portion of manna, the food that sustained the Israelites in the desert, so they did not have to gather it on Shabbat. Some eat challah with a little salt, some with a little honey. Some insist on tearing it, some on slicing it. We are simply expressing our delight in the specialness of our Shabbat dinner.

The challah remains covered while Shabbat is being sanctified with the blessing over the wine. It is uncovered and blessed.

Prayer over the Bread

*Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha-olam,
ha motsi lechem min ha-arets*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Blessed are You, Divine One, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.



Appreciate the gift of feeling full

We are literally commanded to eat and be satisfied and give thanks. While many traditions have an expression of thanks before eating, Judaism is one of a few traditions that end the meal that way. The Birkat HaMazon or Blessing of the Food, is a long prayer listing everything for which our Sages were grateful and linking it all with a blessing for peace, gratitude for our freedom, and wish that we be granted a world made entirely of Shabbat. In this way, we are inspired to create Our Palace so that it exists in all time and space, for all people, through extending the blessings of peace and freedom to all.

One essential part of the Birkat HaMazon is as follows:

Blessing for the Children

*Kakativ: v'achalta v'savata, uveirachta
et Adonai Elohecha al haaretz hatovah
asher natan lach.
Baruch atah Adonai, al haaretz v'al hamazon.*

כַּכַּתִּיב, וְאַכְלֶתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ, וּבֵרַכְתָּ
אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמְּזוֹן .

As it is written: When you have eaten and are satisfied, give praise to your God who has given you this good earth. We praise You, Divine One, for the earth and for its sustenance. Turn Their face to you and grant you peace.

One final blessing for Peace

Oseh Shalom

*Oseh Shalom bim'ro'mav
Hu ya'aseh shalom alei'nu
V'al kol Yisrael
V'al kol Ishmael
V'al kol yoshvei tevel
V'imru Amen.*

עוֹשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו
הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׁמָאֵל
וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

You who make harmony in the ultimate reaches of the universe, grant peace to all the children of Israel, the children of Ishmael, and all who dwell upon this planet. And we say: Amen.

